

Concord changes building codes

*Flooding
complaints
flood in*

by BUD MARTELLO

CONCORD - At the March 3 regular meeting of the Concord Township Trustees, nine amendments to the building code of the township were approved.

Trustee Chris Galloway said that "zoning regulations give our building officials the tools they need to mediate neighbor to neighbor disputes. Right now, they have no standards to help them. Having these regulations gives them at least an official basis to mediate disputes. And we did not just pull these regulations out of thin air, we have stacks and stacks of e-mails and phone records that plead with us to solve the issues raised one neighbor versus another."

"We need to be proactive about these regulations, because once we have a situation not covered, when we do cover it, the situation that precipitated it is grandfathered in, and we

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haven't solved it," Trustee Connie Luhta said.

At issue in the amendments were things like hot tubs; what they are and whether they would require fencing like swimming pools, and where on one's property they could be located. Parking cars on lawns beside garages was at issue, the township wanting to require paved areas to park extra cars. Parking of recreational vehicles was also at issue, requiring they not be put out front of a home. Accessory buildings and building heights were also being added to the codes. Selling farm produce from roadside stands was proposed for regulation as well.

Information about the new regulations can be obtained from the planning and zoning office, Kathy Mitchell at 354-7510 extension 106.

The March 3 meeting followed the snow and rains of late February, and like other communities, Concord Township had its share of flooded roads and properties.

"We need more improvements," Galloway said, "and even if we need to go door to door to get an accurate picture of what's going on out there, we need to do it so we can push for action by the county to help us control storm waters this summer."

Fire Chief Mike Warner reported on the number of rescues they were required to perform during the flooding. He gave kudos to the service department that had to pull debris from storm drains

to alleviate the high water.

"Those guys worked their butts off," Warner said. "During the month of February there were eight motor vehicle accident responses, 19 rescues and five structural fires."

Warner's tip for the month had to do with the flooding.

"If you see high water, do not attempt to go through it. Turn around and go another way. And if you see a road closed sign, do not ignore it. We had high water at Hermitage, Auburn and Vrooman roads, and people would not obey the closed road signs. Do not ignore these signs, they are there for your own protection."

The department is having a 1998 Chevrolet pickup truck refurbished by the Auburn Career Center.

"We have about two thousand dollars in effort in it, and it is coming along nicely," he said.

The fire department has secured a grant of \$122,000, with matching funds of \$7,000 that will buy traffic preempters for the traffic lights in the township.

The township trustees passed a resolution covering EMS billing for nonresidents. Residents will continue to have "free" service.

The chief said that he has been talking to the dispatch center and there have been an inordinate number of false alarm 911 calls, primarily from children who have been given cell phones to play with.

"Even if the phone is out of service, it will still call 911, and this is causing problems at the dispatch office. If you are going to give a child an old phone to play with, please remove the battery."

Service Director Frank Kraska echoed Warner's comments about the efforts of employees of the service department to unplug drainage ditches.

"Please report to us if you see a drainage ditch plugged with debris, so we can come and clean it up."

The service department will be placing advertisements for bids for stone and tar for the 2011 road work.

Kraska reported that the township had gone through 3,000 tons of salt, about 60 percent of last winter's usage.

Building inspector Kathy Mitchell reported that 10 permits had been issued in February and generated \$640 in fees. A use permit was granted to La Mesa restaurant for outside dining. Year to date the number of zoning permits issued is exactly the same as last year. Mitchell also said the township is interested in buying back any city cemetery plots that might not be required by families who purchased them and now may have changed their minds about using them for one reason or another. Call the treasurer's office at 354-7510, extension 128 for more information.

The recreation department building needs a new roof and the trustees passed a resolution to move this for-

ward. Linda Legg, director of recreation reminded the trustees that once again this year the Egg Scramble would be held at 11:15 a.m. on April 16, at the baseball field. The secret Easter Bunny will attend.

President of the trustees, Paul Malchesky said, "We were pleased to attend the grand opening of the new KeyBank branch in Concord. It may mark the turnaround in the economy here, to have a new business come in and start up."

The sheriff's department reported that there were 740 calls for service in the month.

An \$80,000 grant was being sought to acquire MDT cells for all the cars. This would allow the deputies to handle report duties without leaving the scene and when they get back to the station download the reports, saving time and keeping the cars out where they belong more efficiently.

Township administrator Jack Nettis said Ricerca had requested a termination of the enterprise zone agreement they have with the township.

"This was an arrangement that had to do with the personal property tax, which no longer is in effect, so the agreement is no longer needed," he said.

Nettis also implored residents to use the curbside recycling. The fire department will continue to collect aluminum cans and paper can be placed in the bins at the township grounds.